**Rationale:**
As of the 1 January 2008, all schools are required to comply with the Working with Children Act 2005, and ensure that any person unsuitable to be involved in 'child related work' does not do so.

The Working with Children (WWC) check aims to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm. It is designed to complement good selection, supervision and training practices (including rigorous reference checking).

The WWC check verifies a person’s history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time the cardholder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings. The WWC check is administered by the Department of Justice.

**Goals:**
1. To ensure children under our care are protected from being exposed to inappropriate people.
2. To ensure all people engaged in ‘child related work’ with our students and who are required to have Working with Children Checks, do so
3. To ensure that our school complies with the relevant Acts and laws.
4. To provide an environment that is safe.

**Implementation:**
1. All workers or volunteers related in 'child related work' must undergo Working with Children checks prior to commencing work.
2. You are considered to be performing 'child related work' if you work or volunteer at a school or school related activities, and you volunteer or do this work on a regular basis, and you have direct contact with children under 18yrs of age which is unsupervised, and you do not qualify for an exemption.
3. All teaching staff members are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, and undergo ongoing monitoring that satisfies Working with Children check requirements, and are therefore exempt. Police officers are also exempt.
4. Parents who volunteer in relation to an activity in which his or her child ordinarily participates (eg: classroom reading) is also exempt. If the same parent volunteers in a class or activity that his or her child does not ordinarily participate in, then a check is required.
5. School Council does not pay for Working with Children checks. WWC Checks last for 5 years.
6. All people required to have Working with Children checks are issued a WWC Check Card which School Council expects them to display on their person at all practicable times when working or volunteering at the school or during school related activities.
7. School Council will maintain a record of volunteers with up to date WWC Checks.
8. School Council requires that all volunteers directly involved in school camps, excursions, sleep-overs, teaching of swimming lessons, transport of students without staff members present, extra-curricular activities such as school sporting teams etc all have Working with Children Checks.
9. School Council will consider other activities such as incursions on a case-by-case basis.
10. **Application Process**
1. The candidate must complete a Working with Children Check application form. The forms are available online or at Australia Post outlets in Victoria.

2. Under the section marked ‘Details of Organisation’, candidates should ensure they state Ferny Creek Primary School

3. If the applicant passes the check they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWC check card 2-3 weeks later.

4. Further information about the application process is available on the Department of Justice webpage.

5. A police records check gives information about a person’s past criminal record and is only valid at the time of issue. The WWC check is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or disciplinary findings from professional bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In addition, not all criminal offences are relevant to the WWC check. Broadly, the WWC check considers serious sexual and violent drug offences.

6. A staff member or volunteer is required to undertake a WWC check even if they have already completed a police records check.

7. If the applicant does not pass the check they will be given an Interim Negative Notice. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful the applicant will be issued with a Negative Notice. This means they have failed the WWC Check and cannot undertake ‘child-related work’ or work in a school.

8. Commencement at Ferny Creek Primary School is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWC check card. Any queries should be directed to the Principal.

**Responsibilities**

**Our school must:**

- identify all staff who require a Working with Children check;
- ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the check;
- ensure prospective staff and volunteers have passed a WWC check before commencement;
- check the card’s validity on the Department of Justice webpage;
- have a photocopy of the WWC card and with details updated on the school register (if individual is a staff member, copy to be kept on the staff member's personnel file);
- ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure staff members hold a valid WWC check card at all times.

**The staff member or volunteer must:**

- provide the successful WWC check card prior to commencement at Cockatoo Primary School;
- notify the office if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence;
- apply for a new WWC check before their card expires.

**Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s four-year strategic review cycle.

**Budget**

A program budget request is presented in term 4 of each year and is to be based on a program review for the previous budget period.

**Author/Responsibility/Date**

EP&P/M.Coyle/2014
